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MAKING *CACCIA TRAGICA*: GIORGIO AGLIANI, GIUSEPPE DE SANTIS AND THE ITALIAN RESISTANCE

Marina Nicoli

Caccia tragica (Tragic Hunt, 1947) was the debut film of director Giuseppe De Santis, who would go on to receive worldwide acclaim for *Riso amaro* (Bitter Rice, 1949) and *Non c'è pace tra gli ulivi* (No Peace Among the Olive Trees, 1950). The film – a dramatic exploration of the social tensions of the aftermath of civil war, centred on the struggle for collective ownership of the land – was inscribed in the current of neorealism, which is generally regarded as having its founding moment in *Roma città aperta* (Rome, Open City, Roberto Rossellini, 1945), a film which won immediate international recognition for its portrayal of the sufferings of ordinary Italians under the Nazi occupation. Several early neorealist films were produced outside of conventional channels, though this does not entirely apply to Rossellini's film, which was produced by Excelsa, an established company that was an offshoot of the distributor Minerva. *Caccia tragica* is especially significant in this regard because it was the first tangible manifestation of the idea that film production could be organised on a different basis and initiated from below. It was financed and produced in fact by the association of former partisans ANPI (Associazione nazionale partigiani d'Italia), which was engaged in a concerted effort to memorialise the anti-fascist Resistance and embed it in post-war political culture. Together with CVL (Corpo Volontari della Libertà), ANPI had already produced a documentary, *Giorni di Gloria* (1945) and a fiction film, *Il sole sorge ancora* (1946).

Caccia tragica was the second fiction film financed by Anpi. De Santis was a director who insisted on exercising artistic prerogatives. This meant that its making was bound up not only with the need to make a record of the recent past, but with the effort to re-found film aesthetics and re-

shape the relationship between cinema and the people by injecting entertainment with social and political concerns. Besides artistic issue, the making of *Caccia tragica* was characterised by financial difficulties as well as political boycotts.¹

The film stands as a landmark moment in the brief history of Italian neorealism, not to mention the even briefer history of grass roots film production. According to leading Italian film historian Gian Piero Brunetta, the production of films ‘outside market laws’ was an ambitious and unrepeatable experience that was linked to the post-war aspiration to re-found culture on the basis of popular engagement. Not only did the aspiration to halt the invasion of American cinema with admirable initiatives such as *Caccia tragica* and later *Achtung! Banditi!* (Carlo Lizzani, 1951) collide with efforts to re-establish the film industry as a national resource. It also went against the political trends of the period, which saw the Vatican and Us-backed Christian Democrats (who consolidated their hold on power in the divisive 1948 election) achieve ascendancy over the left. This moderate, Catholic party actively worked to eliminate neorealism from Italian cinema as it promoted a culture of national reconciliation which entailed drawing a veil over the entire experience of Fascism, war and the Resistance. According to Stefania Parigi, by 1947 the topic of the Resistance was perceived as outdated and reluctantly tolerated by Italian audience.² inaugurated *Achtung! Banditi!* (1951) seems to definitively close this short series of fiction films committed to deal with the recent war and Liberation.³ By the early 1950s, with reconstruction completed, the country was embarked on a path to economic growth that was sustained by a film industry in which optimism and escapism seem to be the dominant values. Lino Micciché stressed that by 1952-1953 neorealism – seen as an ethical, cultural and political climate - was almost over. *Umberto D.* (Vittorio De Sica, 1952) marked the end of neorealism while *Pane, amore e fantasia* (Luigi Comencini, 1953) inaugurated the lucky genre of pink neorealism. Films turned toward lighter atmospheres, perhaps more coherent with the improving conditions of the country.⁴

Therefore, *Caccia tragica* stands for a future that did not come to pass; it is a symbol of the vision of Italy as a participatory democracy led by the left which flowered in the aftermath of the war. To investigate the production history of the film is to explore an experience that, in other circumstances, might have blossomed further. The fact that it did not is mainly due to larger political events and the role of the United States in securing Italy's allegiance to its vision of western democracy, but analysis of the precious archive papers left by the production organiser, Giorgio Agliani, sheds light on the many practical difficulties that were involved in making a film that was dense with political, cultural and economic implications. Agliani's papers permit a detailed reconstruction of all the production phases, as well as an investigation of the issues that dogged the production and ensured that its entire history, from inception to distribution of the completed film, was laborious and tormented.⁵

Building the public image of the Resistance

From the moment of its founding in Rome in 1944 ANPI, together with the CVL (Corpo Volontari della Libertà) and the party-dominated directing committee of the Resistance, the CLNAI (Comitato di libertà nazionale alta Italia), both of which would shortly disband, displayed a recognition of the need to document, communicate and represent the experience of Resistance as a key plank of the new identity of the country. The main objective was the construction of the memory and public image of the struggle against Fascism and Nazism, by means of the constitution of archives, the holding of exhibitions and sponsoring documentaries. These initiatives were characterized by a dynamic view of the way communication is used and show the concern to explain the nature of the recent conflict to national and international public opinion. The idea of 'a war for freedom' took shape clearly at this time, along with a determination to appeal to national sentiment and to independence struggles of the Risorgimento. The definition of the Resistance as a 'second

Risorgimento' was used to attract support from different parties⁶: the glorious Risorgimento was connected to the more recent event of Resistance, giving a patriotic and nationalistic flavour.⁷

Besides, it sealed the unity of the partisan forces, while provoking no objections from the Allies and even lending a positive gloss to the policy of the Savoia royal family.⁸ The Communist Party gave to Resistance the meaning of a fulfilment of Risorgimento and not a simple repeat of it. Moreover, peasant people were recognised as an important part of the second Risorgimento.

The memory of Resistance was then built with the use of symbols, rituals, celebrations, images and cultural artefacts. The aim was to shape collective memory and culture was used to consolidate a praxis.⁹

As soon as the conflict was over, the liberation committees planned the establishment of historical offices charged with collecting documents and materials. Within this structure, the propaganda section was given the task of 'keeping alive the spirit of the Volunteers of Liberty through the press, the radio and direct broadcasts using their own systems, as well as the theatre and the cinema'.¹⁰ This communication strategy culminated with the organization of the *Exposition de la Résistance Italienne*, held in Paris from 14 to 26 June 1946, and with other exhibitions produced for circulation in Italy and in Europe. The partisan propaganda soon clashed with the efforts of political parties to stake out their own visions of the country's recent past and immediate future. The catalogue of the Paris exhibition was not distributed, on the pretext of a typographical error, but, in reality, was boycotted by the Communists. The ambitious project for spreading internationally the image of the Resistance was blocked at the highest political level when the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (the prime minister's office) decided not to grant any funding to the exhibitions.

Giuseppe De Santis was an influential figure in the film community that had moved to the left in the last years of Fascism. He was contributor to the magazine *Cinema*, in which ideas for a new cinema close to reality had been mapped out in 1940-42 and he had been among Visconti's

collaborators on the anti-fascist manifesto-film *Osessione* (1942). De Santis became one of neorealism's leading champions in the mid 1940s and a firm believer in the idea that the Resistance was a watershed not only in national history but in cinema too. In an article titled 'La giusta via' (The Right Path, 1946), De Santis argued that Italian cinema must sink its roots into Italian reality in order to grow, to be strong and to become a great cinema that was also appreciated internationally: 'there was no stronger reality in that moment, in the immediate post-war period, than of events that had characterized the Italian Resistance. It seems to me that this should have first place in the ranking of topics to be treated in films', he argued.¹¹ In his view, 'the right path' coincided with realism, that is the study of reality: 'this is the great meaning of Italian neorealism, that is a cinema that is close to the people, a cinema that has understood the people'.¹² In a later interview (1981) De Santis stressed how Resistance has been decisive for the birth of neorealism: 'neorealism is born after and from Resistance. My personal search for realism has been civil commitment and political militancy'.¹³ The struggle for freedom has a strong symbolic and mythopoeic influence in shaping national identity, at least in the filmic representation.¹⁴

During 1947 and 1948 a lively debate about realism and neorealism took place on *Cinema*, *Bianco e nero*, *Filmcritica*, *Rassegna del film* and *Rivista del cinematografo*. Guido Aristarco was editor in chief of *Cinema*, which became the most active place for cultural debate and political opposition. The participation to theoretical and critical debate was usually prior to a debut as film director. De Santis, as well as Lizzani, Puccini, Mida and Pietrangeli, was a militant journalists who started working in the film industry as screen player and director's assistant. This meant there was a strong relation between the critical debate and artistic production.¹⁵ In opposition to Zavattini view – in favor of a worship for documentary and objectivity – De Santis believed in neorealism as a shared mood, arisen soon after the end of the war. The Italian tradition of realism (from Giotto to Caravaggio, from Dante to Verga) represented the glue to establish a strong continuity in the history of Italian cinema.¹⁶

De Santis moved from Rome to Milan in 1945 with the aim of contributing to the birth of a cinematic current that was founded on the Resistance. The documentary *Giorni di Gloria* (Days of Glory, 1945) was made by ANPI and CVL with the material shot during the Resistance. The film, co-directed by Luchino Visconti, Mario Serandrei, Marcello Pagliero and Giuseppe De Santis, aimed to tell the story of the partisan struggle and events between the flight of the king from Rome on 8 September 1943 until the liberation of the North in April 1945. The documentary was made with a specific propaganda objective that was to show how the entire Left, supported by the mass of ordinary Italians, contributed to the fall of Fascism and the creation of the new democratic state. The documentary was distributed in cinemas in early November 1945, at a time when the impact of the Resistance on national politics was waning (Resistance leader Ferruccio Parri had become prime minister in April 1945, but his government was in crisis and he would be replaced by the leader of the Christian Democrats the following month). In *Film d'Oggi*, the magazine which was seen as a continuation of *Cinema*, Carlo Lizzani greeted this film initiative with enthusiasm. '*Giorni di Gloria* grossed millions and millions of Lire', he later enthused. It was, he continued, 'another lesson after *Roma città aperta*, another warning to those – both Italians and foreigners – who want to liquidate our cinematography and seek to boycott it, to block it and to hamper its development in every way'.¹⁷ Lizzani's words stand as testimony to the broader political and ideological debate on movies with political subjects that in those years encountered both censorship and many obstacles to their circulation in cinemas. In October 1946 an influential Christian Democrat deputy, Paolo Cappa (at the time Undersecretary for Entertainment), railed against a type of film production that 'uses and abuses dramatic motifs and spectacular elements, not recommended from a moral point of view, such as the theme of banditry and outlaws'.¹⁸

Within ANPI, a 'Press and Cultural Office - Film Section' was set up with the aim of producing documentaries and films to illustrate the partisan struggle. This development needs to be seen as part of the short season of 'Hollywood on the Navigli' (named after Milan's celebrated

urban waterways). A city that was not renowned for cinema experienced a period in which new production companies, film production plants, cinema magazines and ambitious projects were born. The Roman group of the magazine *Cinema* (which had ceased publication in 1943) moved to Milan in order to revitalise the periodical *Film*, turning it into a lively and combative weekly. De Santis, Lizzani and Massimo Mida all worked in the editorial office, while Gianni Puccini and Michelangelo Antonioni acted as link men with the film world in Rome. The ANPI office was charged with developing new film projects. At its head was a former Resistance commander named Giorgio Agliani. A strong believer in the redemptive power of culture and its role in shaping collective identities, Agliani was convinced that cinema could be harnessed to the task of building a just society. Like many politicians and intellectuals of the time, he cultivated an idea of cinema as an instrument of information, documentation and cultural dissemination.¹⁹ Film, in this outlook, became an effective language for building and spreading the memory of the partisan resistance. It was his misfortune that his work entered its most creative phase at precisely the time when the attack on neorealism was taking shape and hostility was building against references in film to the recent divisive conflicts. The reintroduction of the institution of censorship (Law No. 379, 1947) and government financing (bound to a sort of preventive control on the screenplay) determined a progressive weakening of what has been called ‘new cinematic humanism’.

Giorgio Agliani, film organiser

Caccia tragica, as well as other neorealist films, represented the attempt for a re-birth of the Italian film industry. The situation in the early 1940s was dramatic. There was a German occupation, Italy was divided into two zones, some cinema machinery had been moved north to the Republic of Salò's Cinevillaggio in Venice, and Cinecittà, the most important film production centre, had been devastated and turned into a refugee camp. Nevertheless, filmmakers continued to meet among the ruins of occupied Rome thinking about the future, intending to revive Italian cinema. Aware of the

enormous difficulties to come, they predicted a hard-fought battle with the old arch-enemy: Hollywood. Military organisations like the PWB and Film Board prepared for the arrival of film companies in Italy when the ENIC Monopoly was formally abolished on 5 October 1945. Without State funding, the studios at Cinecittà and Pisorno closed (instead Titanus studios at Farnesia and Fert studios in Torino were open), and with its technical and artistic management staff scattered, the Italian film industry attempted to emerge from beneath the ruins. Material and moral ruins became such an inspiring and unprecedented set able to inspire directors – even those not lined to neorealism.²⁰

No longer shackled by quotas and dubbing taxes, US films flooded into the Italian cinemas: 188 in 1946, 287 in 1947, 344 in 1948, and 369 in 1949. Italian cinema had to face a real invasion and this provoked a strong split between producers and exhibitors who had opposite interests²¹. This led to a heated debate about legislation to protect national cinema. On the one hand Italian cinema seemed to melt away, but on the other hand neorealist films stood for the future of Italian film industry and became mirror of the recent past.

The international success of *Roma città aperta* (1945), *Paisà* (1946), *Il bandito* (1946), *Aquila Nera* (1946) showed there was a real will to achieve artistic and economic recovery. This is well explained by Gilles Deleuze: ‘Italian cinema had at its disposal a cinematographic institution which had escaped fascism relatively successfully, on the other hand it could point to a resistance and a popular life underlying oppression, although one without illusion. To grasp these, all that was necessary was a new type of story capable of including the elliptical and the unorganized, as if the cinema had to begin again from zero by questioning afresh all accepted American traditions. The Italians were therefore able to have an intuitive consciousness of a new image as it was being created’.²² The production of *Caccia tragica* is set within this specific context.

In November 1945, ANPI announced some ambitious projects, which were reported in one of its press organs, *Squilla alpina*: ‘Three films and one subscription. The film section of ANPI has

initiated the production of three films with a partisan subject to be completed by 1946'.²³ The first was a film adaptation of Elio Vittorini's Resistance novel *Uomini e no* (Men and Non-Men), which was to be directed by Luchino Visconti. The initiative was intended to document the contribution made by the partisans, the urban guerillas of GAP (Gruppi azione patriottica) and the mass of ordinary people to the liberation. From the start, there was a welfare aspect to the initiative since money raised from the film would be devolved to widows and those disabled in the conflict. In order to finance the movie, Agliani proposed adoption of a crowdfunding mechanism, thus imagining a film that would be popular in content and democratic in its mode of production. ANPI launched a subscription by selling lots: tickets will be sold at the price of Lit. 50 each. These tickets will entitle the holder to view the film, upon payment of the difference on the admission ticket or receipt of a refund [in the event of the price being inferior]'.²⁴ In the event, the film was not made, due to differences of opinion within ANPI,²⁵ and the controversy between the leader of the Communist Party Togliatti and Vittorini in the magazine *il Politecnico* over the relationship between culture and politics and between intellectuals and the Party.²⁶ The year after, in 1946, ANPI entrusted Agliani with the organization of a new film project, *Il sole sorge ancora* (The Sun Also Rises),²⁷ written by Guido Aristarco with De Santis and Lizzani. The production was a collaboration with Scalera Film, which guaranteed economic discipline and a professional level of organization.²⁸ The film took place in September 1943 and tells the story of Cesare, a soldier who returns to his home town in Lombardy, which is occupied by German troops. The young man, inspired by the new political climate, does not hesitate to join the partisans. The film was intended to be the '*Roma città aperta* of the North'. Goffredo Alessandrini was originally slated to direct but ANPI vetoed him on account of his past in Fascist cinema. The scriptwriters then proposed Aldo Vergano, a filmmaker who had been marginalized during the regime on account of his political views. The proposal was accepted and the film made on schedule and with relatively few difficulties. A critical and box-office success, the film was awarded two *Nastri d'Argento* prizes

(Silver Ribbons) in 1947: a ‘special award’ to Aldo Vergano and ‘best non-protagonist’ to the actor Massimo Serato. The positive outcome of the film allowed ANPI to cover its costs and provide aid to partisans’ families, widows, orphans and former fighters. It also meant that a new film venture could be embarked on.

Caccia tragica was a film that had a specific agenda. ‘Given the fundamental importance of cinema, in agreement with the comrades [Emilio] Sereni and [Antonello] Trombadori [both leading Communists], it was decided to make under the auspices of ANPI a new progressive film on the problems of veterans in agricultural cooperatives and the particular conditions of the peasants fighting with the landowners in the post-war period’.²⁹ War veterans were seen not simply as victims of the national catastrophe, but as ‘the first fighters and the victors of our rebirth’. The film was conceived as a contribution to the work of spiritual and material reconstruction in which the whole country was engaged. Agliani was appointed general organiser of *Caccia tragica*. In the contract signed between ANPI and Agliani (23 January 1947), the tasks of the general organizer are the following: ‘the search for financing, the care of all the industrial and commercial phases, such as production and distribution in Italy and abroad. Obviously, you are allowed to use one or more technical collaborators, but such collaborators will always have to act in accordance with your directives, therefore you have complete responsibility for the entire process. However, your decisions regarding production or commercial issues, during the shooting and editing, must be previously agreed with the special commission created by ANPI for the production of *Caccia tragica*’.³⁰

Film production represents a challenging and complex context from an organizational-managerial point of view³¹. One of the most critical elements is the coordination of three different professional areas³²: the artistic one (film actors, the director, the screenwriters, etc.); the managerial-administrative one (which includes the producer and all those who supervise organizational, financial and marketing activities) and the technical one (which includes the

professional figures involved, for example, in set design, the production of costumes, etc.). The coexistence of these very different spheres poses many problems in terms of coordination and integration.³³ *Caccia tragica* was a case where, in addition to these, another sphere was added: politics had a considerable weight in determining the troubled production path of the film.

The task of coordination and responsibility for the entrepreneurial risk entailed in the production were totally in the hands of Agliani, who had – however – also to move within the political boundaries defined by ANPI. Agliani knew that these circumstances would most likely lead to moments of conflict. In a confidential letter written in January 1947 and addressed to Mariani (an ANPI official), he complained about the fact that his decisions had to receive the prior approval of the organisation's film commission before implementation. He believed that this would slow down production and entail continuous acts of mediation. 'It is not possible, in a difficult environment like the cinema, to waste time and wait for tomorrow when timeliness is the key to all success', he objected. At the same time, he lamented the lack of clarity about how financial issues would be resolved. Agliani's room for manoeuvre thus was conditional. He requested that clear and precise directives be given or that he be allowed to decide matters autonomously, on condition that he be responsible for the consequences of his personal choices. During the production of the film, he often had to implement decisions taken by others and be held responsible - as the material executor - of the outcome of such decisions. 'If these conditions persist', he remarked, 'I sincerely and honestly do not feel like continuing to take on such a serious responsibility and I would have to terminate the contract'.³⁴



Figure 1. Giorgio Agliani and Giuseppe De Santis on set during the shooting of *Caccia tragica*, Valli di Comacchio, 1947. Private collection.

The production was marked by a series of financial crises, which Agliani did his best to resolve, while also having to deal with some political hostility within ANPI. In addition, he was obliged continually to mediate with De Santis, for whom the film had to be the complete expression of his poetics and style. In his view, *Caccia tragica* was intended to be the prototype of a new realistic cinema in which the traditions of American and Soviet cinema merged; cinematic technique and

spectacular effects were to be harnessed to the need to address the realities of the moment. As he saw it, it was unacceptable that artistic choices were constrained by a budget and the need to control production costs. For ANPI, by contrast, the opposite was the case; economic viability had to come before all else otherwise its whole venture in the field of film production would be compromised.

An uphill path: the financing of the film

In the official ‘Plan for the realisation of *Caccia tragica*’ (7 October 1946), it is possible to identify the issues that - from the very beginning – would characterize the difficult production path of the film. These are mainly related to the difficulty in finding a balance between economic, political and artistic concerns. Thanks to Agliani’s good offices, the Ministry for Postwar Assistance (hereafter MPAB) promised a contribution of Lit. 12 million towards the costs of the film on condition that it was granted the right ‘to choose the subject, approve the screenplay, designate the director and the geographical area where the film will be shot’. Within ANPI there were many concerns about these stringent conditions. In the first instance, association leaders want to avoid ‘mistakes made with *Il sole sorge ancora*’. The creation of a special commission was therefore entrusted with supervising production and managing its administrative aspects. The work of the commission was, however, subject to decisions made by ANPI and the MPAB. In the plan it was also specified that ‘the organization and processing of the film must be carried out on an exclusively industrial level’. In a situation characterized by lack of financial resources and the absence of an adequate organisational structure, ANPI sought to underline that the guiding principle had to be the minimisation of waste in resources and time combined with professional seriousness. The plan for the realisation of the film highlights the over-riding concern for budget coverage. The film budget is estimated at Lit. 25 million. To secure the missing capital (Lit. 13 million), four different methods are proposed: 1) direct funding by ANPI; 2) co-participation with the General Command of the CVL; 3) agreement with a distribution company; 4) request for a loan to the Banca nazionale del lavoro (BNL). The last

two solutions were considered difficult because, in the first case, ANPI feared excessive interference by the distributor and, in the second, the financing would involve the payment of interest. During October and November 1946, Libero Solaroli, who was later officially designated production inspector, made contact with the distribution company Minerva to seek to establish a contract with a minimum guaranteed payment. Agliani was skeptical about the outcome of the negotiations because he feared that Minerva might either seek to influence political and artistic choices or be put off by what it learned of them. He thus invited Solaroli to exercise discretion in circulating the script.

In November 1946, Solaroli drew up a new estimated budget in which the cost of the film rose to Lit. 36 million. The most significant cost items were those relating to technical personnel (Lit. 10 million) and artistic personnel (Lit. 9 million) in addition to raw film stock (Lit. 6 million, including processing).³⁵ Solaroli stressed the impossibility of drawing up a properly detailed budget due to the absence of fundamental information. His aim therefore was to give a general idea of costs.³⁶ Thus, the first and most serious problem Agliani had to solve was the financial one. At the end of January 1947, just before the shooting was about to start (filming began on 11 February 1947), the Roman ANPI executive committee entrusted him with the task of obtaining a guaranteed minimum. In the letter, it was reiterated that ‘any final decision is taken by this executive committee, following the opinion of the film commission’.³⁷

Contemporaneously with the beginning of the shoot, the expected MPAB financing disappeared because the Ministry itself was dissolved. Former prime minister Ferruccio Parri and the deputy Communist leader Luigi Longo wrote to the ANPI executive committee urging it to find a solution and prevent the production of the film from being interrupted: a hypothesis that is to be excluded above all for political reasons. Parri and Longo suggested that ANPI should ring-fence a sum of Lit. 20 million, which would then be covered partly with the guaranteed minimum and partly with payments from CVL.³⁸ Filming started about ten days later thanks to the arrival of a

small sum from the CVL. At the same time, given the gravity of the financial fragility of the production, Agliani began the negotiations to obtain the minimum guaranteed by a distributor and started to hunt for a production partner to take a 50 per cent stake. The partnership project dated from February 1947 and follows a rise in the estimated budget (31 December 1946) to Lit. 47 million. The estimate will continue to rise, up to the final figure of Lit. 68 million.³⁹

Shooting begins, problems continue

Brunetta has noted that neorealism did not involve major changes in the structure of production costs or indeed the level of them.⁴⁰ If the use of real settings saved on some items, there was an increase in spending ‘on raw stock, on the living costs of the crew, on the exploration of places, on preliminary preparation, on transport’.⁴¹ Neorealist films were produced following the typical economic rules of film production: “not a single film of the neorealist movement has not been produced at industrial prices and according to normal production schemes”.⁴² Besides, considering the overall production of the immediate years after the end of the war, neorealist films were the ones more closely connected to the established structures of the Italian film industry. *Roma città aperta* was produced by Excelsa Film, one of the most active production company in the post-war years, specialized in comic and melodramatic films. Films produced by cooperatives or associations were occasional.⁴³

In the case of *Caccia tragica*, production cost coverage was one of the most serious problems, since it was produced by a voluntary association with very limited experience in the field and no organizational structure useful for film production. Moreover, shooting started without any distribution agreement in place and this weighed heavily on the day-to-day financing of the film.

At the start of March, Agliani wrote to Marcello Caccialupi (the production manager) reporting the difficulty in achieving a partnership agreement or a contract with a guaranteed minimum. This difficulty was mainly determined by the discrepancy between the progress made in

one month and the costs that had been incurred. 'We do not know where we will end up. It is logical that no producer or capitalist as you want to call him is willing to put his millions into a project that seems really bottomless', he confessed.⁴⁴ Agliani believed that the crisis had several causes. On the one hand, he complained that he has been held up in Rome seeking funding and had not been able to adequately keep watch over the production. On the other, he believed that De Santis had been profligate. 'It is necessary for the director to get it into his head that the film must absolutely recover the investment that had been made and make a profit', he argued. The solution was deemed to lie a new production plan drafted by Solaroli with the aim of 'saving, renouncing the superfluous, intensifying the rhythm of work, tightening the screenplay'. Agliani and Solaroli believed that the rising costs were largely due to excessive expenditures resulting from director's demands and the lack of a sound organizational structure.⁴⁵

Agliani sought to reassure ANPI that he would find a distributor or a second production company, while he worked to obtain funding from the cooperative federation of Emilia-Romagna.⁴⁶ But he also defended what had been achieved up to that point: 'De Santis is a great director and we are witnessing the realisation of a masterpiece,' he asserted. At the same time, he sought to break down the intransigent position of a director who did not want to give up what he considered essential for the expression of his authorial style and poetics. Agliani reminded De Santis that the difficulty in finding a financial partner was due to the fact that several times the estimated costs had been exceeded: 'we have spent about twenty million [Lire] and practically we have done very little. Where are we going to end up? Do you want to become a great director like Visconti who makes great films but can not find any producer willing to risk his capital with him?'⁴⁷ He tried to explain De Santis the need to accept the new production plan drawn up by Solaroli and to work with more discipline, reducing waste to a minimum. The collaboration of the director remained essential to the completion of the work 'and to succeed in spite of everything'.⁴⁸ He reminded the director that 'this is your first experience and you can do it thanks to the Party and what a serious failure it would be

if we were to fail'. The production manager Caccialupi was instructed to curtail De Santis's artistic demands: 'do not be afraid to take extreme measures and have no regard for anyone. What matters is exclusively the successful outcome of the work'.⁴⁹ However, De Santis proved unwilling to compromise and this intransigence led to the intervention of the highest levels of the party. Antonello Trombadori, a leading cultural official of the PCI (but also an art and film critic), wrote to the director in late March trying to mediate: "My dear Peppe ... if you persist with your position, it is clear that the film will not come to an end.... An unfinished film brings the consequences that you know, first of all for the party, then for a series of comrades who have taken responsibility in this undertaking - myself included - then for you. Isn't it really a hymn to the very collective responsibility that you want to promote in *Caccia tragica*?'⁵⁰

In view of the continuing financial difficulties, some ANPI officials carried out an inspection in Ravenna, at the request of Agliani himself, and concluded that the costs incurred were excessive compared to the amount of material that had been shot. The inspection was carried out by Boldrini⁵¹, Graceva and Sartori, who took the view that Agliani had not adequately supervised proceedings. In particular, they believed that he had neglected his responsibilities by failing to coordinate with the film committee and the ANPI executive committee: 'It seemed like you gave your all to the task, but in isolation and without communication with us'.⁵² They demanded that production proceed with maximum economy and that a serious financial plan should be drawn up. ANPI officials stressed the need for Solaroli to take on the role of production inspector and start negotiations for the minimum guaranteed revenue with Generalcine and Minerva, though these would not ultimately have a positive outcome. At the same time, they began to explore the hypothesis of involving the Federation of Cooperatives. Both routes required that future work be conducted with 'the highest moral, financial and political guarantees'.⁵³



Figure 2. The troupe of *Caccia tragica* with some ANPI officials during the shooting, Valli di Comacchio, 1947 (Giorgio Agliani is the sixth from left). Private collection.

The financial problems were temporarily offset by a loan of Lit. 10 million from a bank, the Cassa di Risparmio in Ravenna. The loan allowed shooting to continue and covered the cost of two important scenes, that of the trial and that of the workers' assembly. Agliani reports that the funds were not sufficient to cover the last important scene, namely that involving the train, and for this reason, in mid-April, he asked the ANPI executive committee to 'definitively resolve the financial question'.⁵⁴ He also wrote to Trombadori to invite him to use his influence with the Communist leadership to address the financial problem: 'The Christian Democrats have supported Proia [Alfredo Proia, politician and film producer, owner of the distributor Generalcine] for the minimum

guaranteed. I asked you to put pressure on Monaco [Eitel Monaco, president of the Italian film producers' association ANICA] to speed things up ... in any case it is necessary that the Party to use all its influence so that we do not get to 27 April and we have to start all over again'.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, in mid-May Agliani spoke of the 'eternal financial question, which has arisen again'.⁵⁶ The attempt to obtain funding from the Cooperatives Federation had not come to a positive end because the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) refused a loan for the film. Officials of the SACC (Autonomous Film Credit Section) explained to representatives of the Federation that '*Caccia tragica* is a sure loss' and, in any event, for statutory reasons it was unable to grant loans to agricultural cooperatives. Agliani was troubled by this because the advance of 10 million had been secured from the Cassa di Risparmio in Ravenna on the assumption that it would be repaid with credit obtained from BNL. In order to solve the 'absolutely desperate' situation, Boldrini's intervention would prove fundamental. He personally travelled to Rome, together with Agliani, to conduct negotiations with a distribution company. Negotiations were started with the Universalia and the Titanus companies. The latter eventually signed the distribution contract, covering the costs of editing and sound synchronization. The situation finally seemed to come to a positive ending. The Titanus agreement led the Cooperatives Federation to contribute a figure of Lit. 1 million,⁵⁷ while negotiations between ANPI and the BNL were resumed.⁵⁸

The final financially-motivated crisis dates from the end of May 1947. A few days before the end of shooting, ANPI decided to bring the troupe back to Rome in the conviction that the material shot was more than enough to complete the film. Therefore, it was no longer necessary to bear the costs of staying in Ravenna: 'prolonging the process is not sustainable for financial reasons'.⁵⁹ This provoked a furious reaction from De Santis, who refused to complete the film and declared that he would sue ANPI. The situation required the intervention of Trombadori, to whom Agliani complained vigorously about ANPI's rash decision which he regarded as 'inconsiderate and harmful' and put down to bad advice within the association.⁶⁰

The artistic issue

Caccia tragica was De Santis's first film as director. It is a film to which the director brought political convictions and political vigour as well as a taste for the spectacular. The film represents a compromise between a new content, that of the climate from which neorealism arose, and classic spectacular forms with their proven ingredients. De Santis saw himself as an artist and, as such, he demanded full freedom in all decisions regarding the film. From the script, to the style of directing, to the choice of actors, to the music, everything became a source of conflict with ANPI. As De Santis himself recalled in a 1982 interview, the film represented the culmination of a dream, that of being 'surrounded in the manner of a general by all that regiment of workers, actors and technicians who for some years I had a desire to have my side and at my disposal'.⁶¹

The demand for artistic freedom clashed with the type of organization envisaged by ANPI. In fact, from the original plan⁶², it emerges clearly that ANPI and the MAPB reserved the right to approve the final version of the screenplay and to choose as director a person who 'enjoys the trust of the whole ANPI National Committee as well as that of the Film Commission'. Despite the lack of budget, however, ambitions were not lacking and, in the plan, it was proposed to sign contracts with 'the best Italian actors like: Clara Calamai, Massimo Girotti, Andrea Checchi'. ANPI was aware that this would involve a significant financial commitment but at the same time the presence of famous names would have a positive impact on the box office and on the rental of the film.

The direction was entrusted to De Santis as he has already collaborated on the documentary *Giorni di gloria*. Moreover, he had strong experience as a critic and writer and could be considered as a founding father of neorealism, intended primarily as a cultural commitment and moral orientation. The screenplay of the film was the result of a team work by the director, Cesare Zavattini, Corrado Alvaro, Carlo Lizzani, Umberto Barbaro and Michelangelo Antonioni. For the

shoot, De Santis chose the locations of the Ravenna countryside - Marina di Ravenna and Marina Romea - and the nearby Valli di Comacchio.

De Santis's artistic choices often translated into unsustainable production costs for ANPI and thus required Agliani's mediation. The first clash between the director and ANPI was related to the casting of the leading actress.⁶³ De Santis's approach was based on a preference for a mixture of professional actors and new faces, often lacking acting experience. The interest in professionals was already an important deviation from the programmatic lines of neorealism, for which real environments and non-professional players were becoming obligatory. However, it is important to remember that neorealism was not a unitary current, except for what concerns the common theme of post-war reconstruction. The interpretation of neorealism as a monolithic artistic current is in fact denied by the heterogeneity of the results achieved by the movement's directors.⁶⁴ For Zavattini himself - with whom De Santis entered into open controversy over *Roma ore 11* (Rome, 11 O'Clock, 1952) - there were many 'neorealisms' depending on who were the directors, screenwriters and actors: 'we are not an organized team, each works on his own and according to his own mind, but there is a single purpose; we want, all together, to purify and renew'.⁶⁵

De Santis planned to entrust the role of Daniela (Lili Marlene) to Clara Calamai, an established name who had worked with Luchino Visconti on *Ossessione*. Calamai signed the contract in January 1947 but in February she withdrew, declaring herself to be seriously unwell. However, from the correspondence between Calamai and De Santis, it emerges that the actress had reservations in relation to the way her character had been outlined. At the end of 1946, in a letter dated 31 December, the actress raised some concerns about her character: 'You say my character has been re-defined; this amazes me because I believed that it has been totally defined last October when we talked for a long time about the subject [of the film] and the characters'.⁶⁶ Calamai reiterates to De Santis that she absolutely did not want to play an 'unpleasant or bad' character. This was probably the real motivation that drove her to give up the part. Lili Marlene was the chief

negative character of the film; the one who initiates in the theft of the money and the taking of Giovanna as a hostage.⁶⁷ As an alternative - thanks to the mediation of Visconti - Agliani proposed Vivi Gioi, who, however, was at first considered unacceptable by De Santis on account of her limited public appeal.⁶⁸ The director preferred big names like Anna Magnani or Isa Miranda, but ANPI did not have the means to support these options. However, Gioi would be engaged to play the part in February 1947.⁶⁹ It is interesting to note the draft contract states, as the first point, that 'you declare yourself to be in perfect knowledge of the screenplay and dialogue of the film and declare that this screenplay is to your full satisfaction regarding everything concerning the role you will have to play'.⁷⁰ The desire to avoid any repetition of the dispute with Calamai is transparent. De Santis compromised over casting as his commitment to the project over-rode his reservations. In a letter to Agliani he wrote: 'poor Giorgio, we put you in such a mess. But I am, more than ever, convinced that we must not give up. Today the whole world of cinema would rejoice in seeing *Caccia tragica* fail, but that's why (and for many other reasons) that we must not give up'.⁷¹

At various junctures in the decades that followed, and thinking of his relationship with the Communist Party, De Santis would cite the occasions on which he had stood up for his freedom: 'I insisted that no one should enter into things that were for me to administer, manage and decide'.⁷² The interventions of the party were remembered as being related to the economic and financial aspects of the film and never to ideological or artistic matters. In the production of *Caccia tragica*, the two aspects were strongly connected as the freedom demanded by De Santis heavily affected the budget and determined a substantial increase in the estimate. Several times, Agliani would be compelled to call De Santis to order, begging him not to squander money. The party's shadow was always present in the conversations between De Santis and Agliani. Pressures from ANPI began as early as 14 November 14, 1946 in a letter containing some suggestions relating to the script. Agliani provided the director with some observations on how to deal with certain themes, in particular stressing the need to better define the workers' cooperative as 'the central character of the film'.⁷³

The letter also suggested avoiding such disturbing scenes as ‘the removal of dead bodies in the first part of the film’, indicating that there was an awareness of the needs of spectacle: ‘in any case cinema is cinema: we agree’.⁷⁴

Shortly after the start of shooting in February 1947, Agliani sent some notes to De Santis in which he reminded him of the party’s expectations regarding the story: ‘We have seen more printed shots. They are really good, worthy of the October revolution ... but be careful not to overdo it. You have to say what we want you to say, but softly. In short, even in this case, apply the line’.⁷⁵

The letter dated 8 March 1947 contains suggestions from Agliani to De Santis regarding the direction of the actors and the construction of the characters.⁷⁶ ‘I have the impression that Girotti is too mechanical in his movements. Especially in the scene with the sergeant, he has movements that are hardly those that a wanted man (and I know from experience), even if guilty, adopts before an officer of the law’.⁷⁷



Figure 3. Giorgio Agliani (left) and Giuseppe De Santis (right) in Bologna during the shooting of *Caccia tragica*, 1947. Private Collection.

The first fifteen days of work on location made it clear how difficult was to reconcile the director's positions with the principles of a good organization: 'De Santis does not give up anything, Martelli (the cinematographer) is slow and frightened. The overall consequence is that the shooting is terribly slow'.⁷⁸ The extension of production schedule is a characteristic of many films, but in this case the concern over the completion of a project that was already burdened by a lack of financial resources, emerged even more strongly. As was seen in the previous section, frictions were constant during the production and these persisted once shooting ended. De Santis disagreed with ANPI about the film music composer. In June 1947 the association communicated to Agliani that Maestro Tommasini had been designated as the composer for film music.⁷⁹ De Santis objected and suggested other names, like Rossellini (the director's brother), Rosati, Masetti and Cicognini. In his view, the style and inspiration of the composer has to be in line with 'the tone and the cinematic characteristics of *Caccia tragica*'.⁸⁰ Despite this, ANPI reiterated its decision.⁸¹ De Santis, however, insisted that 'the choice of composer is an integral part of the artistic realization of the film and cannot therefore be performed independently of, or even in contrast with, the director's opinion'.⁸² In the end, the task was entrusted to Giuseppe Rosati, who had worked on the music of *Ossessione* under Luchino Visconti.⁸³

De Santis's behaviour validates what, in theoretical work on the creative sectors, is seen as a critical element, that is the importance of human capital in labour-intensive activities. People are the real strategic resource and therefore, for creative and cultural organizations, it is essential to recruit people with an adequate stock of experience, knowledge and skills. However, within these

organizations, the implementation of formalized human capital management systems appears to be particularly complex, especially with reference to the artistic figures. This is caused not only by their often anti-systemic attitude⁸⁴, but also by the fact that they are guided by motivational drivers and career preferences, which are peculiar and certainly different from those of the film producer.

Film distribution between boycott and celebration

Caccia tragica was officially presented at the Venice Film Festival in September 1947, where it was honoured as the best Italian film. The distribution of the film on the Italian market was entrusted to Titanus and Libertas (a production and distribution company close to the PCI).⁸⁵ Despite the prize and the positive reactions of critics, the circulation of *Caccia tragica* encountered serious problems. At first, the film entered distribution, and then it was excluded from first run cinemas. In the Communist daily, *L'Unità*, film critic Ugo Casiraghi complained that the film was not being shown in Milan, where many exhibitors had refused to programme it: 'They are the same exhibitors who feed the most dismal American films to the public [yet] for *Caccia tragica* there is no place'.⁸⁶ From the start, the film was greeted with some hostility by Catholic critics. Gian Luigi Rondi, in the rightist daily *Il Tempo*, defined *Caccia tragica* as a Communist product, a film 'that would delight Comrade Béla Balázs [a Hungarian-Jewish writer, symbolist poet, and influential film theoretician] and the Supreme Committee of Soviet cinema in Moscow'. Rondi praised aspects of De Santis's style and the skill of the actors, but criticised the excessive interference of politics.

The film became the object of a campaign and was one of the first works of neorealism to suffer from a boycott. De Santis was systematically critiqued and *Caccia tragica* boycotted by exhibitors after some pressure from the government: 'For our audience we do not want such stuff, it was declared'.⁸⁷ The reception abroad was different, especially in France, where the film was widely appreciated and De Santis compared to Rossellini and Sergej Ėjzenštejn. The film was presented in

cinemas in March 1948 (the distributor was the Lux Compagnie Cinématographique de France).

Given the political orientation of the director, the French Communist press supports the film with great enthusiasm. George Sadoul defined the film as ‘one of the masterpieces of the Italian school’,⁸⁸ which had the merit not only of representing the masses but also of rousing them, even if this was achieved by resorting to paroxysms and excesses in the screenplay.

The reception was also positive in the American market, where the film was distributed by Films International: *Caccia tragica* was considered a ‘robust film’, a surprising example of the way the issue of veterans was being treated in cinema: ‘The Italian producers have sent us another masterly study on the struggle of the Nation to emerge from chaos’.⁸⁹

Conclusion

The sustainability or otherwise of film production initiatives from below in postwar Italy did not only depend on economic and financial issues. It needs to be analyzed within the broader political and cultural context of those years.

By looking at the economic side of the story, *Caccia tragica* confirms the analysis of Pitassio and Noto. On the one hand, there is the ambition to found a cinema based on new theory, language and aesthetic. On the other hand, this project continues to be strongly connected to traditional “mode of production”. The production of *Caccia tragica* came to a positive end with the participation of Titanus who backed the final stages and was in charge of distribution. It is worth mentioning that the documentary *Giorni di gloria* and the first fiction film made by Anpi and CVL, *Il sole sorge ancora*, were respectively distributed by Titanus and Enic. In 1949 De Santis directed *Riso amaro*, which was produced and distributed by Lux Film. In 1949 Glauco Viazzi wrote an article titled “I film non piovono dal cielo” (Films do not fall from the sky)⁹⁰: the film industry inevitably needs capitals which are usually in the hands of big production and distribution

companies. Innovative “modes of production”, like crowdfunding or financing from cooperative and political associations, has remained exceptions in the history of Italian cinema.

In addition to this economic analysis, the role that cinema occupied in the political activity of the Communist Party first, and of the Christian Democrats later, inevitably affected the fate of the neorealist movement and production projects from below. From 1944, the Communist Party considered the participation of intellectuals to be important for the moral and material reconstruction of the country. Cultural commitment and the political participation of the intellectuals were among the priorities of the ‘new party’ that was re-founded on mass lines by Palmiro Togliatti on his return to the country from the Soviet Union.⁹¹ Between the end of the war and 1946 there was a continuous stream of initiatives that reflected the continuing unity of the forces of anti-fascism. The PCI supported initiatives designed to appeal beyond its core supporters at the same time as it began the construction of its propaganda apparatus.⁹² However, cinema did not seem to be part of this programme. At least until 1947, cinema was not perceived as a privileged terrain of the cultural battle in the left-wing press. For their part, leftist film critics did not elaborate adequate schemes for the analysis of the economic and structural problems of the Italian film industry.⁹³ Another element that influenced the place of cinema in the politics of the PCI was the debate on the relationship between intellectuals and the party. The party tries to maintain a similar degree of control over its affiliated intellectuals as that of the Church. The controversy that arose between Togliatti and Vittorini, a recent convert to the party who asserted the primacy of culture over politics and refused to accept subordination to political dictates, is emblematic. It showed the difficulties that the PCI faced in seeking to become ‘the true hegemonic force of a vast intellectual array’.⁹⁴ The case of *Caccia tragica* is rife with attempts made by ANPI officers and by some members of the PCI to intervene on issues of film content and interfere with artistic choices.

While the PCI was slow to understand the importance of cinema within cultural politics, on the other hand, Catholic forces ably moved to occupy key positions in the sector. Close relations

with American film interests enabled them to take steps, which contributed to determining the short life of the neorealist current and of productions from below. In the period 1945-1948, neorealist films were only 34 on a total 215, which means 15% of the production. The number is undoubtedly tiny but the production of *Caccia tragica* was set within a lively period of ideological and political debate when intellectuals and the cinema played an important role to shape national identity. A time when Italian cinema tried to re-build its production structure; a time of both crisis and re-birth.⁹⁵ According to Alberto Abruzzese the “disappearance or death” of neorealism was not much a problem of an absent production structure but more a cultural problem. Neorealist directors have been unable to understand Italian society was changing: their movies were opposed to the “market”, characterized by massification and moral decay.⁹⁶ On the other side, Ennio Di Nolfo stressed that neorealism was boycotted by Italian cinema audience and civil society who was still too much anchored to the Thirties and not able to evolve.⁹⁷ The complexity of this period has influenced a lively academic debate which is still open with important historiographical issues.⁹⁸

After the traumatic experience of *Caccia tragica*, ANPI would abandon the field of film production, mainly for financial reasons,⁹⁹ while Giorgio Agliani continued on his own both as a production organizer and as founder of his own production companies.¹⁰⁰

NOTES

¹ *Il sole sorge ancora*, was the first fiction film produced by ANPI and CVL. By looking through archival evidence (Archivio Nazionale Cinematografico della Resistenza, Fondo Giorgio Agliani) it emerges that Anpi and CVL had several problems. One of which was the reimbursement of box office earnings by ENIC (Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche) who was in charge of Italian distribution. In a letter by Giorgio Agliani it is stated that “Those antidemocratic people, who have the control of Italian film industry, had boycotted the distribution of *Il sole sorge ancora*”, Pro memoria for Anpi Secretary, signed by Giorgio Agliani, no date, (Archivio Nazionale Cinematografico della Resistenza, Fondo Giorgio Agliani).

² Stefania Parigi, *Neorealismo: il nuovo cinema dle dopoguerra* (Venice: Marsilio), 93-94.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 316-320.

- ⁵ The story of *Caccia tragica* was inspired by a real episode that happened in Milan. Immediately after the war, a truck carrying funds to a small factory was attacked by a group of bandits. The police, flanked by the factory workers, chased the criminals. Along the lines of this episode, De Santis built the events of the film, setting them in the Po Valley and in particular in Ravenna.
- ⁶ The topos of the Resistance as “second Risorgimento” was also used by De Santis and Mida Puccini for the foundation of neorealism poetry. The Resistance was depicted as a democratic revolution and the idea of nation and people replaced those of social classes and proletariat. On this topic, see Parigi, *Neorealismo*, 306-307.
- ⁷ Philip Cooke, “La Resistenza come secondo Risorgimento: un *topos* retorico senza fine?”, in *Passato e Presente: rivista di storia contemporanea*, v.30 n.86 May-August 2012.
- ⁸ Ersilia Alessandrone, “La costruzione dell’immagine pubblica della resistenza: le prime mostre”, in Adolfo Mignemi and Gabriella Solaro, eds., *Un’immagine dell’Italia. Resistenza e ricostruzione. Le mostre del dopoguerra in Europa* (Milan: Skira, 2005), 47-48.
- ⁹ Philip Cooke, “La Resistenza come secondo Risorgimento”, 67-69.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ¹¹ Antonio Vitti (ed.), *Peppe De Santis secondo sé stesso: conferenze, conversazioni e sogni nel cassetto di uno scomodo regista di campagna* (Pesaro: Metauro, 2006): 168.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Andrea Martini, “La ricerca stilistica come impegno civile”, in *Cult Movie*, 3, April-May 1981.
- ¹⁴ On this topic see the debate in Francesco Pitassio, Paolo Noto, *Il cinema neorealista* (Bologna: Archetipo libri, 2010), 2-4.
- ¹⁵ Parigi, *Neorealismo*: 269-271.
- ¹⁶ Pitassio and Noto, *Il cinema neorealista*, 1-21.
- ¹⁷ Carlo Lizzani quoted in Adolfo Mignemi, *Storia fotografica della Resistenza* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002), 56
- ¹⁸ On this topic see Mino Argentieri, *La censura nel cinema italiano* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1974): 69-72; Mauro Cesari, *La censura in Italia oggi (1944-1980)* (Naples: Liguori, 1982): 80; Gianpaolo Bernagozzi (ed.), *Il cinema allo specchio. Appunti per una storia del documentario* (Bologna: Patron, 1988).
- ¹⁹ Tatiana Agliani, “Biografia di Giorgio Agliani”, *Il Nuovo spettatore*, 6-7, 2002, 13-21.
- ²⁰ Callisto Cosulich, “I conti con la realtà”, in Callisto Cosulich (ed.), *Storia del cinema italiano. Vol. VII- 1945/1948* (Venice-Rome: Marsilio-Fondazione Scuola Nazionale di Cinema, 2003), 21.
- ²¹ On this topic see Libero Bizzarri and Libero Solaroli, *L’industria cinematografica italiana* (Florence: Parenti, 1958); Lorenzo Quaglietti, *Storia economico-politica del cinema italiano 1945-1980* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1980); Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1979); Barbara Corsi, *Con qualche dollaro in meno. Storia economica del cinema italiano* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2001); Vito Zagarrio, “L’industria italiana tra crisi della produzione e boom dell’esercizio”, in Cosulich, *Storia del cinema italiano. Vol. VII- 1945/1948*.
- ²² Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 205-15.
- ²³ “The initiative was promoted with the purpose of documenting the contribution made to the liberation war by the partisans, the GAP and the mass of the people. The initiative had no commercial but exclusively moral and welfare purposes and for this purpose ANPI, for the financing of films, promoted a popular subscription”, Mignemi, *Storia fotografica della Resistenza*, 56.
- ²⁴ “The initiative has received the unanimous favour of the members of the government, the parties, the CGIL, the press and youth organizations and women, etc. We therefore ask you to give the maximum impact to our initiative and to indicate the number of tickets you can place in your area”, Archivio Istituto Nazionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione (INSMLI), Fondo Corpo

Volontari della Libertà, Letter from the National ANPI Committee (signed by Arrigo Boldrini) to the Ufficio Stralcio of the Lombardy Regional Command, 2 November 1945.

²⁵ “Regarding the signing of the film *Uomini e no*, Salivetto says that he will never give his consent for the production of this film; furthermore, he highlights the need to make films that deal with the partisan life in the mountains as it is the least known by the majority of the population”, INSMLI, Fondo CVL, Minutes of ANPI Executive Committee, January 31, 1946.

²⁶ See S. Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow: The Italian Communists and the Challenge of Mass Culture, 1943-1991* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), Chapter 1.

²⁷ The title of the film is inspired by the password transmitted by Radio London with which the Italian insurrection began.

²⁸ In 2007, Tino Casali, president of the Milanese ANPI, recalled that ‘shooting started with a thousand logistical and financial difficulties. We were cinema novices. The organization was based on improvisation and a continuous struggle not to squander the funding obtained by the Volunteer Body of Freedom’, quoted in Bianchetti ‘La breve estate di Hollywood sui Navigli’, *Cinecritica*, 48 (2007), December Issue, 95.

²⁹ Archivio Nazionale Cinematografico della Resistenza (ANCR, Torino), Fondo Agliani, “Progetto per una compartecipazione alla produzione del film Anpi Caccia tragica”, 22 February 1947.

³⁰ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Contract accepted by Giorgio Agliani on 23 January 1947. The remuneration is equal to 40,000 lire per month.

³¹ On this topic see Richard Caves, *Le industrie della creatività. Economia delle attività artistiche e culturali* (trans. G. Negro) (Milan: Etas, 2001); Severino Salvemini and Giuseppe Soda, ed., *Artwork & Network. Reti organizzative per lo sviluppo dell'industria culturale* (Milan: Egea, 2001).

³² Xavier Castaner, “The tension between artistic leaders and management in arts organisations: The case of Barcelona Symphony Orchestra” in Marian Fitzgibbon and Anne, *From Maestro to Manager: critical issue in arts and cultural management* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1997), 379-416; Mary Anne Glynn, “When cymbals become symbols: conflicts over organizational identity within a symphony orchestra” *Organization Science*, 11 (3) (2000), 285-298

³³ Eric Knight and William Harvey, “Managing exploration and exploitation of ideas in creative organizations”, *Management Decision*, 53 (4) (2015), 809-827

³⁴ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Mariani, 14 January 1947.

³⁵ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, “Schema di preventivo per la fabbricazione del film Caccia tragica”, written by Libero Solaroli, 21 November 1946.

³⁶ In the general warnings, Solaroli wrote, ‘This is not the place to repeat how to make a budget, rationally. Everyone knows that it is necessary to have a complete and definitive screenplay; to make an accurate division of the scene in order to ascertain what is needed scene by scene; to know precisely the places chosen in a definitive way by the director for the realization of individual shots ... to make a detailed work plan (the dialogue of the script must be definitive to be able to judge the time necessary for the realization) ... In the absence of screenplay and inspections I have estimated considering the director's request to have 90 days of work’, *Ibid*.

³⁷ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Anpi Executive Committee to Giorgio Agliani, 28 January 1947.

³⁸ These were ENIC (distribution company) money transfer for the film *Outcry* and those from Trans World Film (rental company) for the film *Pian delle stelle*. ANCR, Fondo Agliani, “Proposta degli onorevoli Ferruccio Parri e Luigi Longo circa la realizzazione del film Caccia tragica”, 1 February 1947.

³⁹ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, “Progetto per una compartecipazione alla produzione del film Anpi Caccia tragica”, 22 February 1947. In the document Marcello Caccialupi is the production manager.

⁴⁰ Alberto Farassino, “Il costo dei panni sporchi. Note sul modo di produzione neorealista”, in Vito Zagarrio (ed.) *Dietro lo schermo. Ragionamenti sui modi di produzione cinematografici in Italia* (Venice: Marsilio, 1988), 135-143

⁴¹ 'From an economic point of view, producers remember these films as real catastrophes', Gian Piero Brunetta, *Il cinema neorealista italiano. Storia economica, politica e culturale* (Bari: Laterza, 2009), 40-42.

⁴² Carlo Lizzani, "Cinema e industria del film", in *Il Contemporaneo*, VIII, 37 June 1961. On this topic see also: Vittorio Spinazzola, *Cinema e pubblico. Lo spettacolo filmico in Italia 1945-1965* (Milano: Bompiani, 1974); Alberto Farassino, "Il costo dei panni sporchi"; Michele Conforti and Gianni Massironi, "Il modo di produzione del neorealismo", in Lino Micciché (ed.); *Il neorealismo cinematografico italiano* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1975).

⁴³ See Pitassio and Noto, *Il cinema neorealista*, 48-49.

⁴⁴ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Marcello Caccialupi, 13 March 1947.

⁴⁵ 'Reduce to the minimum the requests of the director in terms of needs and extras, etc. Save as much as possible. Meanwhile, it will be good to increase the organizational structure'. ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani and Solaroli to De Santis and Caccialupi, 10 March 1947.

⁴⁶ 'Selvaggiani will try to get money both through the federation and the cooperatives linked to the Party. The difficulty is represented by the socialist president. Selvaggiani suggests making sure that he has a letter from Nenni and Pertini'. ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Arrigo Boldrini, 17 March 1947.

⁴⁷ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to De Santis, 13 March 1947.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Caccialupi, 13 March 1947. In the same letter Agliani highlights the difficulty on the part of De Santis to accept compromises. According to Agliani, the director's choices have often led to an unjustified increase in production costs: 'It is not possible to spend 68 thousand lire to move ships to port and then the scene is not as the director intended. It is necessary for the director to put in his head that the film must absolutely regain its money and earn, because apart from the artistic considerations of each of us, the financier starts exclusively from this base'.

⁵⁰ Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia Roma (CSC), Fondo Giuseppe De Santis, Corrispondenza (1944-1947), Letter from Antonello Trombadori to Giuseppe De Santis, 29 March 1947.

⁵¹ Arrigo Boldrini (Ravenna, 1915-2008) was one of the main leaders of Resistenza in Emilia Romagna: his "nom de guerre" was Comandante Bulow. He was a member of the P.C.I (Communist Party) and has been a member of the Italian Parliament (from 1945 until 2006). He has been appointed President of ANPI from 1947 to 2006.

⁵² ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from ANPI officers (Boldrini, Sartori, Graceva) to Agliani, 28 March 1947.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to ANPI Executive Committee, 16 April 1947.

⁵⁵ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Antonello Trombadori, 14 April 1947.

⁵⁶ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Libero Solaroli, 4 May 1947.

⁵⁷ The agreement dates back to 27 May 1947. In December 1947 the president of the Federation of Cooperatives of Ravenna writes to Agliani to ask the repayment of the loan. The sum of 1 million lire has in fact been paid by the Federation in May with the promise of repayment in June. In December, however, ANPI has not yet returned the sum.

⁵⁸ 'At BNL, La Guardia is in favor of financing and for the sum of twenty million Lire. The only guarantees required: the effects must be signed by Titanus and Libertas', ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Solaroli, 4 May 1947.

⁵⁹ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Arrigo Boldrini to Agliani, no date.

⁶⁰ 'After many battles it is painful for me to accept this solution. I am proud of having made the film in such conditions in which anyone else would have given up after a few days ... you can not imagine what I faced in these last hours as the crew showed its worthlessness, especially some members of the Party', ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to Trombadori, 1 June 1947.

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- ⁶¹ Giuseppe De Santis, *Quel giorno di febbraio a cavallo di una gru*, Fiano Romano, August 1982.
- ⁶² ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Piano di massima per la realizzazione del film *Caccia tragica*, 7 October 1946.
- ⁶³ 'For actors' choice I followed what I have always claimed to be the path of Italian cinema. On the one hand I supported the choice of professional actors because I thought that the great human and civil experience that we were doing with Italian neorealistic cinema was an experience that was also right for Italian professional actors. On the other hand, I wanted to use new actors, new faces. And this was always my choice for my entire film career', in De Santis and Vitti, *Peppe De Santis secondo sé stesso*, 169.
- ⁶⁴ Marco Grossi, 'La rivoluzione neorealista di Giuseppe De Santis', in Marco Grossi (ed.), *Giuseppe De Santis: la trasfigurazione della realtà* (Rome: Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, 2017), 46.
- ⁶⁵ Giacomo Gambetti, 'Un grande esordio di idee e di stile', in *Giuseppe De Santis*, 110
- ⁶⁶ 'I am afraid variations have made my character different from what was expected', CSC, Fondo Giuseppe De Santis, Corrispondenza (1944-1947), Letter from Clara Calamai to Giuseppe De Santis, 31 December 1946,
- ⁶⁷ Libero Solaroli tries to find a solution to the Calamai case as it emerges from a letter to the actress (without date). ANPI has decided to sue Calamai for damages caused by the stoppage due to her refusal. Solaroli reminds the actress that '1) Anpi is trying to protect its rights; 2) the situation of the availability of other actresses is very serious; 3) rental houses make a huge difference between a film with the Calamai and a film without. Where will we end up? How much will the replacement cost ANPI?'. In the final part of the letter, Solaroli reminds Calamai how easy it is to demonstrate through medical checks, the severity or the lightness of the disease that she accuses of having. ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Solaroli to Calamai, no date.
- ⁶⁸ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Telegram From De Santis to Agliani, 16 February 1947.
- ⁶⁹ 'On behalf of ANPI I offer you to play the role of "Daniela" in the film *Caccia tragica*, subject and direction by Giuseppe De Santis under the following conditions ... Your remuneration will betwo million and one hundred thousand', ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Giorgio Agliani to Vivi Gioi , February 22, 1947.
- ⁷⁰ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Draft contract for Vivi Gioi, 20 February 1947.
- ⁷¹ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from De Santis to Agliani, 20 February 1947
- ⁷² De Santis and Vitti, *Peppe De Santis secondo sé stesso*: 204-205.
- ⁷³ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to De Santis, 14 November 1947.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to De Santis, 23 February 1947.
- ⁷⁶ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Agliani to De Santis, 8 March 1947.
- ⁷⁷ 'I want to add an organizational observation. I can not understand the reason why you have many shots printed. I believe that when you have chosen two, they are sufficient. In the case, for example, of the twins' scene, you have even printed the discards', Ibid.
- ⁷⁸ 'The financing plan needs to be reviewed, as the cost of the film will almost be doubled. In the film industry, the most expensive thing is time', ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter to Giorgio Agliani 25 February 1947.
- ⁷⁹ The request to designate Tommasini comes from the Christian Democrats within ANPI. ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Arrigo Boldrini to Agliani, 19 June 1947.
- ⁸⁰ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from De Santis to Anpi Executive Commitee, 15 July 1947.
- ⁸¹ ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from ANPI Executive Commitee to De Santis, 15 July 1947.
- ⁸² 'As already mentioned in my previous letter, I do not intend to affirm a position in principle (which I consider moreover precise duty) but to defend the artistic quality of the film'. ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from De Santis to the ANPI Executive, July 17, 1947.
- ⁸³ De Santis had worked on the film as assistant director.

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- ⁸⁴ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).
- ⁸⁵ Libertas Film was a production and distribution company specialized in the distribution of films from Eastern European countries as well as Russian, Hungarian and Polish films. The company failed in the early fifties as a result of continuous censorships on in-house documentaries and distributed films.
- ⁸⁶ Marco Grossi and Virginio Palazzi (eds.), *Caccia tragica. Un inizio strepitoso* (Fondi: Quaderni dell'associazione Giuseppe De Santis, 2000), 70-71.
- ⁸⁷ Giulio Andreotti quoted in Grossi and Palazzi, 35.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 14.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 73-75.
- ⁹⁰ Glaucio Viazzi, "I film non piovono dal cielo", in *Cinema*, II, 29, 30 December 1949, 349-350.
- ⁹¹ See Gundle, *Between Hollywood and Moscow*, Chapter 1.
- ⁹² On this topic see Albertina Vittoria, *Togliatti e gli intellettuali: la politica culturale dei comunisti italiani (1944-1964)* (Rome: Carocci, 2014), 24-25
- ⁹³ As Brunetta points out: "the real separation between cinema and politics in the first post-war period is exacerbated by the fact that film critics themselves, in the absence of new categories, adopt the unsuitable old idealism idealists", Brunetta, *Il cinema neorealista*, 130-131.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ See Cosulich, "I conti con la realtà"; Barbara Corsi, *Con qualche dollaro in meno*.
- ⁹⁶ Alberto Abruzzese, "Per una nuova definizione del rapporto politica-cultura", in Micciché, *Il neorealismo cinematografico italiano*, 49.
- ⁹⁷ Ennio Di Nolfo, "La storia del dopoguerra italiano e il cinema neorealista", in *Nuova rivista storica*, Vol. 77, 1, 1993, 37-54.
- ⁹⁸ Zagarrò, "L'industria italiana tra crisi della produzione e boom dell'esercizio", 385.
- ⁹⁹ "In addition, ANPI produced *Caccia tragica* obtaining great artistic success, but given the financial difficulties, the gain was modest. Anpi had to sell the film being in the absolute need to pay debts and get cash to organize the national congress. National Anpi in Rome is certain that it will not continue on this path, mainly for financial reasons", ANCR, Fondo Agliani, Letter from Giorgio Agliani to Didimo Ferrari (member of ANPI Reggio Emilia), 16 December 1947.
- ¹⁰⁰ Agliani, "Biografia di Giorgio Agliani", 18-19.